The Theosophical FORUM

NOVEMBER, 1903

OUR ARTICLES:

	PAGE
* * *	121
AMERICAN MUSIC	122
"IRISH GENRE"	128
ANTIQUITY OF INDIAN WRITING	134
AN OUTLINE OF THE "SECRET DOCTRINE"	139

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An Outline of the Secret Doctrine:

COSMOGENESIS.

A series of articles with this title was published twelve years ago in LUCIFER, an attempt being made to follow the Stanzas, and to make clear the metaphysical and scientific principles involved in the teaching of the Building of the Worlds.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL

FORUM

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* * *

"Count it all joy, my brethren;" there is no room for regret, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor fear, nor hate, and such as these; these disagreeable emotions belong to the lower mind, not to the Luminous Blissful Self; not to the Higher Self; nor to *our* Self.

Just as we are not to kill out *all* desire, but only personal and selfish desires, and to preserve and increase the desire for the life of the Soul, so, we are not to kill out perfect love, rejoicing, exultation and bliss, for these do not belong to that mind at all, but to the Self within, whose own nature is Bliss, just as much as it is everlasting life and all-wisdom.

"Perfect love casts out fear," this love is "the fulfilment of the law." This love arises when we realize our oneness with our real Self which is also the real Self in our neighbor.

Verily, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, endurance, goodness, kindness, faithfulness and moderation; against such there is no law."

Then let us not hesitate to rejoice; rejoice as we did in times long past, for true aspiration is always accompanied by true rejoicing; is in fact the very essence of joy; and this rejoicing will penetrate the realm of the immortal singers and be caught up by them and re-enforced until the very heavens shall vibrate with ineffable joy.

"Count it all joy, my brethren." Partless Bliss.

AMERICAN MUSIC.*

It is a critical moment for music in America. For we must open our eyes at last to the fact that there is a clearly defined and all-embracing division of our whole musical world into two distinct groups,—of our whole musical progress into two divergent paths. And with the first clear realization of this division, there comes to us the responsibility of choosing one path or the other if we have a goal to reach—if we are not to join the dreamers by the wayside. The division consists in this, that whether one is born or lives in New York, Chicago, or San Francisco, musically considered he is European,—or he is universal. And this is the distinguishing mark: the European accepts only that which comes directly from Europe or is the immediate fruit (on American soil) of European tradition, while the universal accepts any real music without respect to continent, tradition, or race. The latter, therefore, accepts in large measure what the former does, but welcomes one thing which the former never accepts,—music of universal significance, independent of traditional models, produced in America. These are not in reality opposing positions; the latter merely has a wider circumference and includes the former.

Now by a very natural development of culture-history the Europeans have what we may regard as the official voice concerning music in America. But the universals have a voice which, though newer and at present less far-reaching, is nearer the truth because it more completely reveals the existing situation. The official voice proclaims what the Europeans are doing, and the universal ear lends its respectful attention. The universal voice is a still, small voice telling of human aspiration and achievement anywhere, but the official ear is apt to be otherwise engaged. The official voice chants pride in ancient tradition. The universal sings joy in new life for the present moment. The official sometimes presents the spectacle of lauding inert works built in this country in impotent imitation of great European models. The universal retains the dignity of accepting only the best from any source. The official, the European-American, is exclusive, partial, detached;

* Throughout this article the adjective *Indian* relates to the Red Indians of America, and not to East India, as it does in so many other articles published in the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM. EDITOR.

the universal is inclusive, complete, integral with life itself, though having less understanding of itself, since there is so much more of itself to be understood. The former injures the possibility of its own growth by forbidding itself, in advance, to accept any but works based upon certain traditional models, and tends to become dry, hard, pedantic. The latter opens its mind to the floods of beauty and life coming from any source and in any shape, however unofficial, and becomes warm, glad, and magnetic.

These are the two great divisions in the musical world of America to-day. One stands with a strong grip upon the mass of our official musical machinery. The other, alert, and happy in the growing power within its own spirit, is living its life of joyous creative work, or creative appreciation, until the moment of opportunity shall give the signal for broader action. If we are to advance music, either by creation or appreciation, the results of our efforts must find their way at last to one or the other of these great divisions. It is not a choice between two parties, but between a party on one hand, and a universal cause on the other. If we do not lend to one or the other the powers of creation or appreciation with which we are gifted, but stand off to loot the field for our own pleasure when the fight is over, we find ourselves in the limbo of undecided souls, rejected and ignored of all, deprived of the power and privilege of exerting an atom of influence, either for good or evil.

Let it not be supposed that the universal is to accept all the alleged serious products of American composition,—that were a cross to crush before it could save. The essence of his prerogative and his power lies in his ability to designate and his gladness to welcome the excellent composition, the perfect bar, the worthy underlying spirit, with equal grace, whether it bubbles up from the Rhine or bears down in the blasts from the Rockies. He will be the severest critic of American composition, for he will have its real interests deepest at heart. The wholesale condemner of American composition is no critic at all, but a butcher. We can never estimate justly by comparison with past models, but only by comparison with the present living ideal models in our own heart, mind, and will. What do *they* say of the new work,—is it alive, or is it dead? Is it telling the eternal truths of thought, feeling,

and deed,—or does it lie and sentimentalize about them?

The European and the universal must frequently come in contact with each other; and when the types are well defined there will be a concussion of some kind, especially upon the subject of Indian music, which touches the very heart of the discrepancy. Let us, then, for the clearer understanding of our own views, present certain pertinent questions which have been raised, and answer them by stating a few articles of faith. Especially now that others are taking up Indian music, it is well to clear up a little the ground on which workers in this field must stand.

Here are some queries and comments from various sources. First: Are not incursions into the realm of Indian and Negro music more interesting as a study than for the gathering of actual material for American music? Second: Genuine art is not gained by closing our eyes to the past, nor by clever adaptation. Third: We must draw our inspiration and need of artistic expression directly from the life immediately about us. Fourth: A music drawn from Indian sources is interesting and might well be inspiring, but after all it cannot be the basis of a true national music. It was a product of conditions we may never realize. Fifth: We are not Indians; what have we in common with them?

A broad response to these questions must frame itself somewhat as follows:—

1. In so far as Indian music and Indian thought is exotic, just so far is it perishable in the atmosphere of modern art and thought.

2. In so far as it is germane and vital to modern art and thought, just so far must it be permanently absorbed into our art and life.

3. Ultimate American composition will not be consciously and artificially based on Indian music.

4. Nevertheless, Indian music remains a great source of inspiration and a significant point of departure for the American composer who understands it in connection with its underlying wealth of mythical lore. For it springs from, and interprets in new colors, the "great mystery," the eternal miracle of natural and human phenomena, to which refreshing source American life is leading us back from the artificialities and technicalities which have latterly beset European culture.

5. It is entirely possible, in fact necessary, that ultimate American composition can (but by no means must) be achieved without the knowledge of Indian music.

6. Ultimate American composition can be approached in a certain degree through the knowledge of Indian music, just as a traveller can help himself to reach the top of a mountain by means of a staff.

7. Indian music may serve merely as a study of characteristic motives and rhythms, or as actual thematic material, as the case may be. The greater the composer, the greater the use he will make of it upon occasion, and the greater will be his power to depart from it.

8. Henceforth there will be two distinct channels of development for music suggested by Indian life. The first will employ actual Indian themes; the second will not, but will derive its creative impulse from the inexhaustible world of Indian mythos, to which we are now gaining access.

9. The world of Indian life concerns us because the truth and splendors of Indian mythology, philosophy, and psychology are among the eternal verities and beauties, and the golden opportunity to revivify art at these springs is now.

In regard to article eight, second classification, such music will not, properly speaking, be Indian music, although it would never have had birth but for the inspiration of Indian life. Did it not sound too pedantic it might be called with accuracy, "Music born of Indian spirit." For we are not speaking of works born of that strange anomaly, the Anglo-Saxon, Teutonic, or Latin view of Indian life, but of a very different thing,—works which are the outcome of a final and intimate penetration into the realities of the Indian world-view. And such is the universality and humanity of that world-view that the incursion leads us not merely to a greater knowledge of the Indian, but of ourselves as well.

With whatever detail, whatever special province of the whole musical problem we may be occupying ourselves to-day, let us stop for a moment and look beyond, that we may not lose a sense of the relative proportion which the parts must bear to the whole work to be accomplished. Therefore, let us say definitely, once for all, that whatever the immediate purpose of this or that day's

work, it is, in the end, universal music that we want,—music that shall make a human appeal the world over. But the universal can be approached only through the particular. It is only by giving vital meaning to this particular moment's work, here and now, that it will become universal,—that is, interesting, valuable, life-giving to humanity, now and hereafter. And if the moment's particular work be with the Indian spirit in the very air about us, clamoring in this day of reckoning for justice and appreciation through faithful expression in art, then the proper devotion to that work will bring about universal results. What is it in classic art that gives it universal meaning for us? The particular, critical moment in the life of a particular, typical individual, Antigone, Œdipus, expressed in a concrete picture for all time; or a particular artist's conception of an abstract quantity,—triumph or beauty,—in a sculptured Venus, or winged Victory (essentially particular, or else the whole mass of stupid Greek sculpture in the Louvre would be equally vital to us, which it distinctly is not.) And so if we are just awaking to the dazzling moments of life that have been lived on the very ground we are treading, and if we find in those moments a heroic expression of our own ideal of courage, beauty, freedom, optimism, and succeed in giving it true and living expression for others, we are creating a thing of universal meaning and worth. It matters not what is the name of the race that lived that life.

If the vast spirit of the Indian race, which developed unknown to the rest of the world, is to blossom and live again in the consciousness of living races, we cannot deplore the fact that it is not the spirit of some race other than the Indian, some nameless race, which, being unnamed, will no longer arouse the ire of the philistine. Shall we take down the statues of Lincoln and replace them by tablets saying, "To the memory of abstract heroism," in order not to offend certain individuals. If not, then why should we withhold tribute from Metacomet or Inketunga, even if the task of expressing what they achieved or lived falls upon others? Naturally, we first ask ourselves if theirs is a worthy deed, having a vital meaning for living people to-day.

As a guaranty that those vagaries, abnormalities, or superstitions which must in some degree ally themselves to all life, wild or civilized, are not to be tyrannically saddled upon the realities of

latter-day enlightenment, we refer the critical and doubting to articles of faith, one and two. For only where Indian life and American life meet at the shrine of the universal, will living art be born. And we do not yet dream how significant that meeting is to be. We are describing the achievements of the future. The essays of the present bear to the works of the future the same relation that youthful bears to mature thought. They necessarily exhibit lack of perspective, imperfections in the relation of form to matter, imperfect understanding of the forces at play, and many limitations which only time and the right workers can dispel.

No, clever interpretation is not the question. Any work answering to that description must certainly die the death. Let the composer stand on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi. Let him ask himself, an intruder, what those men must have felt, who through generations inherited that wonderland and the freedom of it. Let him study and learn what they thought and felt and sung. Then let him look for himself—and sing. Let him drink the cup of inspiration to the dregs, until his soul reels at the vision of undreamed-of splendors, the mingling of retrospect and present emotion.

Who cares any longer if his song be Indian or American?

If the truth is to be known, in that song, which the future is reserving for us, the Indian, the American, the European, the African, all, will live again in a universal expression which will be the collective voice of America's world-wide humanity.

"IRISH GENRE."

One of the most vivid, most firmly outlined images in the storehouse of my memory, is old Tim. Timothy Haverty, in full. Not that his name and surname were either much known, or much used, around him. No, they were almost an unnecessary luxury for Timothy, written down in good square, legible, old-fashioned clerical handwriting, in the books of the old chapel, which stands right where land ends, and ocean begins, weather-beaten, eaten up by the salt breath of the sea, but refusing to give way, before either time, wind or rain.

In this chapel, Tim was baptised; before its altar, he also stood, when united in holy matrimony to Judy Regan. But both events took place so very, very long ago, that it almost seemed that they never took place at all; in fact, that there never was a beginning to old Tim; that he always was, in a kind of a way; neither that he had ever any other name but Tim; or from kindly lips, Timmy.

I also ought to mention that the name of Timothy Haverty also stood in full in a diploma, assigned to him, along with a silver medal, by the Lifeboat Association, for the extremely gallant and effective part he once took in the rescue of some ship-wrecked mariners. But that also took place, very many years ago, long before my time.

When our respective destinies brought me and Tim face to face, he was already a very ancient man, wiry enough, and muscular, but with a face from which Time had rubbed off all the too rude marks of masculinity. In fact, when, in the midst of unpacking, and dusting and tidying a tumble-down old place, we had taken for the summer, on the west coast of Ireland, I heard a knock—neither too loud, nor too timid, a knock characteristic of old Tim, as I learned afterwards, respectful, and yet dignified, so to say, a demure knock—and said "Come in!" with my eyes on the opening door, I beheld a face and figure which it would be difficult to class, either among manhood or womanhood. A round face, rather fleshy, with cheeks of that peculiar pink, which is the privilege of healthy old age, a pair of extremely cheerful and very blue eyes,

which always seemed to be on the verge of a knowing wink, and a small nose, of no particular shape, but then so very highly colored. And yet, goodness knows, this rich color was not deserved; in fact, it was pure atavism, the "law of the transmutation of peculiarities from ancestry to posterity," to use the expression of a certain learned pamphletist. But about this later on.

The strange apparition stood in the doorway, adding to my bewilderment, by displaying a clean apron—a man's apron, true, but still an apron—and a distinct, though tiny pigtail of white hair, carefully plaited and folded on the top of its head.

"Will you be wantin' a charwoman, mam?" the apparition spoke; "or maybe you will be wantin' carpets bet?"

When, after a short consultation, my visitor departed, I rang for Mrs. MacDonnell, our cook, and general manager, who was a native, and one of the best informed, at that.

"Who was that man?" I asked.

"What man, mam? Oh, yes to be sure, mam, you mean old Timmy."

"Can he really do charring?"

"Oh yes, mam; Mrs. Lagrange and Mrs. O'Grady, and all the ladies in the neighborhood often gives him all kinds of odd jobs; he is very good at scrubbing, and washing floors, and the gentry are fond of him."

Accordingly, the most extraordinary of all the charwomen that I ever had to do with, was engaged by us, and soon managed to become not only an unattached member of the household, in a way, but also a considerable assistance and help in the researches we all were engaged in, that summer, in the regions of local folk-lore.

His acquaintance with popular stories and legends, comical and grave, grotesque and pathetic, was extremely intimate, and varied. His language was quite pleasant, softened, as it was, with just enough of sing-song intonation to make it only the more attractive; and brimful of catchy little words that seemed to wink at you, and brought their meaning home to you, admirably well. These little words had their source in the very soul of Tim's being, that essentially Irish soul of his, a wonderful mixture of irritating slipshodness, and silent, pathetic patience; of irreverent laughter,

and most profound, fiery mysticism. In great part, these words were strictly personal to him, and, were I to record some of them now, they would sound false and stale, and devoid of true significance. His Gaelic also, was far from being dead; and the most learned of our party always said his Irish recitals were a perfect treat. He also said they were to be treasured, as fast disappearing local versions of some of our great world-old epics.

We were young, and extremely zealous; our excursions into the magic regions of the old Gael, were very spirited, but, alas, as I look back on them now, they were equally amateurish. In fact, we lacked a guiding hand,—and no wonder that it soon became quite a common occurrence for one of us to say, when in trouble or doubt:

"I wonder what Tim would have to say to that? Don't you think Tim could shed some light on the subject?"

And we would troop off, down to the sea-shore, where there stood in those days a small cottage, with walls of rough stones, and a thatched roof. Sweet-Williams, snapdragons, and climbing nasturtiums were in the small front garden, and Tim himself sat on the step, watching a pair of grey goats, always tied together, so that they shouldn't wander too far from home. For a wonder, these goats gave abundant milk though what sort of food they could possibly find on the almost bare sand banks along the shore, was more than one could tell. Watching the goats, I said, but I often suspected that Tim sat so, hour after hour, watching nothing at all, but simply blinking at the shining sea before him, his old face expressing full contentment, as near to beatitude as is possible, in this troublesome world of ours.

Tim's wants were exceedingly small; a few rows of potatoes, some turnips, the milk of the goats, a handful of flour, and a pinch of salt—and Tim lived and managed to keep quite plump and pink. For visitors, he also kept tea, which he always served, accompanied by hot potatoe-bread, delicious, when eaten with fresh butter, but heavier than a middle-sized cannon-ball, and more deadly, for the uninitiated. Once upon a time, he had had a wife, and also two sons, but his wife died long before any of us were born. His sons were also dead, the neighbors said, but Tim had an idea his "boys" were sure to turn up some day, emerging from a certain outer darkness,

called "Ameriky." The "boys" had to seek refuge in that promised land of all too sanguine children of Erin, in the seventies, after a murderous frolic with the English agent of their English landlord, a thing not authorized by law, and often terminating in death, emigration, or ruin. The patient faith with which Tim waited for news from his sons, who, by this time, had had ample time to become old men, or even to die a natural death, was altogether too pathetic; the neighbors chaffed him occasionally; some, no doubt, very well meaning people even tried to sober the exultant spirits of the "quare ould fool." But Tim only shook his head.

"Is it me not know my own boys?" he would say. "They'll come back; oh yes; and if you be so minded, sir, kindly enquire of them postmen in town, about a letter for me, from Ameriky."

Twenty years and more, he had waited in vain for this long-delayed letter. And yet he never lost heart, and never gave up hope.

Twenty years and more, has he lived all alone, noisy pewits and curlews for his only companions. But a few months before we came into the neighborhood, young Tom had established himself in old Tim's cottage,—also in old Tim's heart and life. Tom possessed a pair of very sharp and mischievous eyes, a crop of unkempt hair, all bleached by wind and sun; he also possessed a genius of adaptability. For, though a stranger, the son of unknown parents, a waif from the neighbouring town, ere a single month had elapsed, he had fitted himself wonderfully into his new surroundings; ran errands for old Tim, whom he called "grandda," went regularly to the parish school, and reared top-heavy tadpoles, into real, pretty, live frogs.

At our approach, Tim would get up, and walk slowly towards us, with a quiet gait, which had something of the demureness of his knock. It was quite a little walk from the top of the bent-covered sandbanks down to the shore, where the cabin stood. We would make ourselves comfortable on the dry, clean sand, and, breathing in the bracing smells, of the wide, wide sea, drying weeds, shore-thyme, and an occasional whiff of peat smoke from Tim's fireplace, we would listen to "what Tim had to say."

For the most part he had plenty to say.

The "Slender Gray Kerne," the "Soul of the Priest," or at

least a version of it, "King O'Toole, and his Goose," "The Son of the King of Spain,"—he had them all at his finger's ends, in one form or another. The scope and variety of his vocabulary were simply astounding, and his recitals often reached the level of the purest poetry. His descriptive narratives also were very good.

" . . . So they would not leave a rope without straining, or an oar, without breaking, . . . " one of his stories ran, " . . . ploughing the seething, surging sea. Great whales making fairy music, and services for them. Two thirds going beneath the waves, and one third on the top, sending the smooth sand down below, and the rough sand up above, and the eels, in grip with one another. . . ."

But, for all his bardic eloquence, as a scientific collector of stories, Tim had one very serious, though rather amusing drawback. According to him, a good many adventures we had already read about, in printed books, had happened to no one else but to him personally, or to an uncle of his, in the County Clare, or to his great-grandfather, on the maternal side, who, as it transpired, after a while, was one of the professional story-tellers, about whom the famous book of Leinster speaks, and who were bound to know no less than seven time fifty stories. Otherwise, they would be considered no story-tellers at all.

With all this, Tim Haverty was no common liar, more than that, he was no liar at all. And here is a proof of it: he was always ready to brim over with some warlike description; for instance:

"Each of them began to shoot at other, with their missive weapons, from the dawn of early morning to the middle of midday. . . . And they would make soft of the hard, and hard of the soft, and bring cold springs of fresh water out of the hard rock, with their wrestling. . . ."

Yet he never spoke of himself as taking part in any gallant strife or combat. He was never at the wars, or in mid-ocean, or in distant lands, and owned up, frankly and openly. Comic and grewsome adventures were, of course, different.

So the appearance on the scene, of Tim himself, or his uncle, a great mariner, who knew all about male and female merrows, or his great-grandfather, was always welcome to us; especially the

latter. For, as Tim informed us, the grandfather of his mother was a member of the league of wandering Irish story-tellers, whose custom it was always to assemble once a year in some place in the west or south of Ireland, and pass examinations, so to speak, in story telling. They all would have to tell some particular story, each in his own way, but if, in any man's version, there were too many departures from the main stock, that man had to suffer, and pay a considerable fine. When this patriarch died, young Tim was quite a big boy, and so had ample time to learn lots of beautiful and quaint things from him.

When summer sunshine was over, and October showers drove us back to Dublin, how sincerely sorry we all were, to part from Tim Haverty. We waved our handkerchiefs and hats, and shouted and smiled to him, until the turning of the road hid his grotesquqe, yet kindly and lovable, countenance from us. We all felt we were losing more than a friend, in this queer, odd-looking old peasant. He had become a living link between us,—earnest, yet ignorant lovers of the true Ireland,—and that true Ireland itself, with its inspiring magic lore, its ideals of undaunted manhood, valor, and gentleness; its ever-young, ever-living fountain of true humor, a humor that braces you up, making you kindlier and braver.

Many a beautiful thing, untaught Ollavs of Tim Haverty's type remember and understand; many a thing they treasure up in their hearts; but writing down what they know is out of the question; they are almost to a man wholly illiterate.

With every year they become rarer and rarer, and with them is also disappearing the beautiful world of romance and tradition, in which dwells the spirit of both pagan and Christian Ireland of old.

ANTIQUITY OF INDIAN WRITING.

If the negative argument as to the newness of Indian writing is entirely worthless, can we build up any positive argument in its place? Let us recall for a moment the history of this negative argument. While examining the Homeric poems, Wolff remarked that they nowhere mention writing, alphabets, or written letters. From this observation he not unnaturally drew the conclusion that in the days of the Homeric poems writing was unknown to the Greeks. It was believed that the Homeric poems belonged to a period some eight or nine centuries before our era; and from this major and minor premise the conclusion was drawn that some eight or nine centuries before our era the Greeks were ignorant of writing. This argument, fairly sound as it seems at first sight, was applied to India. It was found that in the writings of the Vedic age no particular stress was laid upon writing; no specific mention was made of written letters; while great stress was laid on the importance of learning the Vedic hymns by heart, and handing them down by memory. It was further believed, on very slender evidence, that all Sanskrit literature not of the Vedic age, belonged to a period later than the rise of Buddhism, some six centuries before our era. And from this major and minor premise, just as in the case of the Homeric poems, the conclusion was drawn that writing was not known or commonly used in India until this later period of Sanskrit literature which was supposed to take its rise somewhere just outside the threshold of our era; and that consequently the Vedic Indians were illiterate. Then the whirligig of time brought in its revenges. The hard facts of inscriptions in rock, the names of Greek mercenaries carved on the statue of Abu Simbel, proved quite conclusively that the Greeks were familiar with writing in the eighth or ninth century before our era, at the very time when Wolff's argument had shown them, satisfactorily enough, to be illiterate. From this quite incontestible and uncontested fact two conclusions can be drawn. These two conclusions are either that the Greeks were perfectly familiar with writing in the days of the Homeric poems,—supposing the Homeric poems to belong to the eighth or ninth century before our era;—and that, consequently, the negative argument from the silence of the Home-

ric poems on the subject of writing was utterly worthless; or, that the Homeric poems, if really belonging to an illiterate age, were immensely older than had been supposed; were immensely older than the eighth or ninth century before our era. The first of these conclusions,—that the Greeks were quite familiar with writing in the days of the Homeric poems, has been excellently discussed by Mr. Andrew Lang; the second conclusion has not yet been sufficiently examined. Then comes the application of the facts to India. If the first conclusion be right, if the silence of the Homeric poems on the subject of writing is perfectly consistent with their origin in an age when writing was quite familiar to the Greeks; then the silence of the Vedic literature on the subject of writing is perfectly consistent with its origin in an age when writing was quite familiar to the peoples of Vedic India. As far as the negative argument is concerned, the peoples of India may have been familiar with writing from the very beginning.

Can be build up any positive argument to take its place? The students of the antiquity of Indian writing may be divided into two schools: those who believe that the Indian alphabets, of which the Nágari alphabet is the type, came from a Semitic source; and those who believe that the Indian alphabets arose independently of the Semitic alphabets, and most probably in India itself. Of the first school, who believe that the Indian alphabets have been derived from Semitic models, Dr. Isaac Taylor is certainly the most eminent, sound, and scholarly. His arguments are stated at great length, with wonderful lucidity, and abundant illustration in his monumental work, *The Alphabet*. To discuss the whole argument would demand a volume. But we may roughly trace its outline. Beginning with the hieroglyphics of Egypt, Dr. Taylor shows the various stages which the hieroglyphic signs passed through; at first pictures they ultimately came to represent sounds. Then Dr. Taylor shows how a selection of these sound signs was made by a "Semitic people;" and that from this selection the well-known type of western alphabet was derived; taking its name from *aleph beth*, that is ox, and house, the first signs in the earliest Semitic alphabet. This typical alphabet found its way to all western countries, chiefly through the intermediation of the Phœnicians; and our European alphabets are all derived from it. In the first Semitic alphabet there

are no vowels, properly so called; only consonants and breathings. The western alphabets gradually developed vowels, according to their needs, by a process which we may illustrate thus. Since Sanskrit words have begun to be represented in western letters, the western type-founders have had to devise a wider vowel system. Hence have arisen a series of accented vowels, especially circumplexed vowels, which did not formerly exist, in English for example. Much in this way, the Western nations developed vowel signs from the not purely vowel signs of the first Semitic alphabet. In this development of vowels, and in the length it has gone in various alphabets, we have a criterion of their closeness to the Semitic original, and therefore of their antiquity. For instance, if we believe that the first Semitic alphabet dates some fifteen centuries before our era,, and if we find that five centuries later another alphabet has developed five true vowel signs, we may roughly generalise and saw that it takes five centuries to develop five vowels. If then, we find another alphabet which has developed only two vowels, we shall be justified in placing it nearer the Semitic original; and in saying, roughly, that it represents two centuries of growth, and therefore dates from two centuries after the Semitic original; dates, that is, some thirteen centuries before our era. This is only an illustration, it must be remembered; but it fairly represents the form of argument which may safely be used to establish the antiquity of an alphabet, and the number of centuries' growth which it represents. So much for this question from the Western side. Let us approach it from the Eastern. The oldest known and certainly dateable writing in India is the famous series of inscriptions of the Buddhist King Asoka. These inscriptions, beginning with the words, *Devânam Piya Piyadasi*, "Priyadarshin, the beloved of the Gods," are in Pali, the sacred language of Buddhism; and are in what is best called the Morya alphabet. The forms of this alphabet are chiefly squares and circles; the simplest of all signs that could be used to represent sound. In only one notable particular does this Morya alphabet differ from the typical Nagari alphabet of India, and that is in having only one sibilant instead of three. This peculiarity is due to the fact that there is only one sibilant in Pali. But for this, we may say that the Morya alphabet, the oldest we know in India, is the same alphabet as the

Nagari; which, masked under superficial differences, is the model of all Indian alphabets, from Hindi and Bengali to Tamil and Telugu. So that, in the days of the Morya alphabet, Indian letters were in a practically perfect form, and had reached the last and highest stage of development. Now this last and highest stage of development, with its wonderfully perfect system of vowels, represent many centuries of growth from the Semitic model, supposing the Indian alphaget was derived from a Semitic source. There must, therefore, have been a long period of growth between the adoption of a Semitic model by the Indians, supposing such a model to have been adopted, and the days of the Morya alphabet. Now the days of the Morya alphabet can be fixed with great certainty and precision. We have, on the one hand, mention of certain Western rulers in the Asoka inscriptions, and, on the other, we have the chronology of Buddhism. We can therefore say that, in the days of the Buddhist monarch, Asoka, and the Morya alphabet, several centuries of development must be credited to Indian writing. Following up this argument, Dr. Taylor concludes, on perfectly sound and intelligible grounds, that we must date the antiquity of Indian writing some time, probably several centuries, before the rise of Buddhism, in order to allow time for the high development which we know was practically complete in the days of the Buddhist monarch Asoka. Turning again to the Western side of the question, Dr. Isaac Taylor, who believes that the Indian alphabet is derived from a Semitic source, is led to seek for a Semitic alphabet which might have served as the Indian model. This Semitic alphabet must furnish certain characteristics. It must be old enough to allow for several centuries of growth between its adoption and the days of King Asoka and the Morya alphabet. It must represent a fair likeness to the Morya alphabet in the form and shape of the letters. It must further be shown that its adoption by the peoples of India could naturally and easily have taken place. These three characteristics are furnished by a Semitic alphabet of Arabia Felix, which Dr. Taylor places about a thousand years before our era; and which is therefore old enough to allow of a fairly high development before the days of Asoka. In form it nearly resembles the Morya alphabet, being, like the latter, chiefly formed of squares and circles. It is also fairly accessible to In-

dia, as we know that, about that time,—three thousand years ago,—Arabia Felix was the inter-port between India and the West. One evidence for this is the use of Indian names for "ivory, apes, and peacocks, and almug or algum trees," in the Hebrew story of King Solomon, whose date is supposed to be about a thousand years before our era.

Dr. Taylor supposes that the Indian alphabet was actually derived from this Arabian original, some thousand years before our era; or, roughly, three thousand years ago; and that, consequently, the Indians were acquainted with writing some four or five centuries *before* Buddha. This is an enormous advance on the Indo-Germanic theory, which placed the beginnings of Indian writing some centuries *after* Buddha; and this advance is made by sure and reliable methods; and not by unreliable negative evidence, as in the case of the Indo-Germanic school. Dr. Taylor's conclusion is, therefore, this: if Indian writing was derived from a Semitic model, the facts of the case demand that this derivation must have taken place about a thousand years before our era; that is, about three thousand years ago. This is a remarkable instance of the tendency which we have more than once noted recently; the tendency of Indian dates to move back slowly through the ages; the tendency of Indian antiquity to expand and open out into wide and wider space. And it is certain that this expansion of India's past, or rather of our understanding of it, has only just begun; and will go far further before it ceases; how far, we as yet only dimly guess.

AN OUTLINE OF THE "SECRET DOCTRINE."

(*Continued.*)

This great at-one-ment, or atonement, that brings about the union of all humanities into one divine life, forms the last and highest aspect of the mystery of the consummation of life which ushers in that true being, that real life, which only human blindness calls Universal Night. This gradual growth to perfect fulfilment of our obligation and relation to the human around us, in morals, and to the divine above us, in religion, forms the third aspect of the mystery of the ever-recurring Nights of the Universe.

In reality these three aspects, these three categories of being, or the seven aspects into which they may be divided, are not separate, isolated natures, and their gradual unfolding does not constitute three different and distinct processes; all three are but phases, aspects, or facets, of the one Being in the evolution and involution of which consists the life of the universe.

When this trinity in unity is unfolded, expressed and manifested, the universe passes to Universal Day.

When the trinity in unity coalesces, unites and is re-absorbed, universal day gives place to universal night. In this universal night, there are no separate existences, no separate lives, no separate attributes; time, space, subjectivity, objectivity are no longer; from the standpoint of our thought there is nothing, because nothing is separate from the eternal, infinite All.

But behind this Universal Being which alternately expresses itself in manifestation, and re-absorbs itself into latency, there is another deeper mystery, so profound that human reason almost refuses to grasp it at all. This is the mystery of the Absolute.

As underneath the lump of metal, that in the jeweller's hands takes many shapes, now melted to liquid, now hardened to solid, the mind conceives a certain quantity of gold, a quantity which remains unchanged, and which the mind regards abstractly as unchanging and unchangeable, even though the lump be separated into many pieces, or alloyed with other metals, or even powdered to dust and scattered on the face of the earth; so behind this evolving and involving universal life, which alternately expands and contracts in universal day and night, thought perceives the necessity of another

universal being, the sum of the powers and forces of this (as the gold is the sum of the substance in the jeweller's hands) and partaking neither in the evolution or involution of this, but remaining eternally changeless, motionless, attributeless, in the everlasting mystery of absolute Being.

The Abstract Unity, which contains within itself the potency of all life, but which has no life because it is all life; which contains within itself the potency of all consciousness, but has no consciousness because it is the totality of consciousness; which contains within itself the potency of all good and beauty and truth, but which is neither good nor beautiful nor true because it is absolute goodness, beauty and truth; which contains within itself the potency of all motion, all sound or colour and sensation, but is without motion, sound, colour or sensation; which contains within itself the potency of all attributes, but is without attributes because it is the totality of all attributes; this is the Absolute: the unknown and ever unknowable God.

II.

Summary.

The Days and Nights of the Universe. Universal Night. Before the Dawn.

We have seen how Universal Night is brought about by the gradual, rhythmical coalescence into unity of all the opposing elements that make up objective existence.

It is impossible by any figure, picture, or simile, to convey any conception of the condition of the Universe when thus withdrawn into latency, because every conception implies division into the conceiver and the thing conceived, while it is by the elimination of this very division, and by the absorption of the thing conceived into the conceiver, of the object into the subject, that Universal Night is produced.

But, though we must regard the condition of Universal Night as essentially inconceivable by the intellect, still there are various considerations which, if intuitionally grasped, may throw some light upon the question of its nature.

(To be Continued.)

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"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics.*

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* to tread in this."

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